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Peabody Education Fund.

TRIBUTES

TO

SAMUEL WETMORE

AND

GENERAL GRANT.

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SAMUEL WETMORE

AND

GENERAL GRANT,

AT THE

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TRUSTEES

OF THE

PEABODY EDUCATION FUND,

NEW YORK, 7 OCTOBER, 1885.

CAMBRIDGE:
PRESS OF JOHN WILSON AND SON.
1885.

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Reprinted from the Proceedings.

100 Copies.

TRIBUTES.

At the Annual Meeting of the Trustees of the Peabody Education Fund, the Chairman, the Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, LL.D., after some remarks of a business character, proceeded as follows: —

I turn, Gentlemen, without further preamble, to the signal bereavements which we have sustained since our last Annual Meeting, and which claim our attention to-day, not merely in view of the vacancies which are presently to be filled, but in justice to the memories of the valued associates whom we have lost.

Mr. Samuel Wetmore died at his residence in this city on the 27th of March last. He was one of the original members of our Board, and had been its Treasurer from the organization of our Trust in 1867, having been selected and nominated for that responsible office by Mr. Peabody himself. Born and educated in Middletown, Connecticut, he had entered early into mercantile life, had spent many years in China, and had been associated, as partner or as principal, in large commercial enterprises in the East Indies and in South America. Mr. Peabody had known him intimately as a merchant of the highest integrity, and as a man of the best disposition and character. We shall all agree, Gentlemen, that our Fund could not have been entrusted to a more exact, faithful, and devoted Treasurer.

Giving no bonds and receiving no salary or commissions, he took pride in watching over the noble endowment which had been made by his illustrious friend for the welfare of the children of the Southern States. His vigilance could not have been exceeded. His particularities often amused us, and when we were pressed for time, came near, perhaps, to rendering us impatient; but they always inspired the confidence that everything could be safely left to so conscientious and untiring a devotion. That confidence, I need not add, was fully justified.

In the early part of his administration of our finances, his duties were sometimes onerous and perplexing; and to the last they occasionally involved more responsibility than was quite agreeable to so sensitive and scrupulous a temperament. But he persisted steadfastly through a term of nearly eighteen years; and our last Annual Meeting was, I believe, the very first at which he failed to be present, and to render his Report, and explain his accounts in person. His health had been visibly and seriously impaired for several years, and he had then met with a painful accident at Newport, which incapacitated him for coming on to be with us. We missed him on that occasion, and we miss him to-day. His obliging disposition and invariable kindness of heart made him a most agreeable companion, and added not a little to the social enjoyments of our meetings.

He died in the seventy-third year of his age, esteemed and respected by all who knew him.

Of the death of General GRANT, which occurred — as all the world took instant notice — at Mount McGregor in this State, on the 23d of July last, I hardly know how to speak. For, indeed, almost everything worth saying has already been said, of his death and of his life, of his whole career and character, until the language of eulogy

is exhausted. No death in our day and generation has called forth more full, just, and admirable tributes, by type and tongue, in the newspapers, in the pulpits, and in public assemblies, in all parts of our own country, and in not a few parts of other countries. The varied fortunes and striking contrasts of his early life, — at West Point, in Mexico, in Oregon, and at St. Louis, until he fell out of all public sight or thought at Galena; his instantaneous reappearance at the call of his country, and his rapid rise from grade to grade until he had fought his way up to the very highest military rank; his unerring instinct; his unflinching courage; his iron will; his unyielding tenacity of plan and purpose; his vast powers of combination, and the sleepless energy with which he pushed through to its end whatever he attempted; his singular reticence, flowering out at last into so many felicitous utterances in writing and by word of mouth; his self-control, his modesty, his magnanimity, and the Christian resignation and heroic fortitude with which he bore the calamities and terrible sufferings of his last months on earth, — all, all have been the themes of touching description and brilliant illustration at home and abroad. I could add nothing, certainly, — even were it fit for me to attempt it on such an occasion as this, — to the unqualified praise which his career as a Soldier has elicited from both sides of the momentous struggle in which he was a leader.

It is glory enough for him that he was the chosen instrument of his government, and of God, in bringing that struggle to a close by the blessed restoration of Union and Peace to our land. The name of Monk is not more inseparably identified with the restoration of the monarchy to Old England than that of Grant with the restoration of Union to our American Republic. No other honors which have been paid, or which can be paid, to his memory can ever equal the universal recognition of that fact and its

acceptance for the records of history. Successive elections to the Presidency during what remained of his life; the splendid receptions which he met with from the rulers and people of the Old World during his memorable foreign tour; the grand national funeral at his death; the costly and countless monuments which are proposed in his honor, at Riverdale and elsewhere, have no significance to be compared for a moment with the simple record that, under his lead, the American Union was saved. That grand funeral pageant itself, on the 8th of August last, owed its main impressiveness to the evidence it afforded — in all its incidents, and by all who took part in it or witnessed it — that a restored National Union, a renewed brotherhood among the people, and a renewed sisterhood among the States, was felt to have been accomplished through him who was thus followed to his grave by troops of friends, — so many of whom had been his foes, — and that all parties and sections of the country were alike ready to attest their glad and grateful consciousness of that glorious result.

But it is for us, Gentlemen, to remember General GRANT, more peculiarly, in his relations to the work in which we have so long been associated with him. Like his friend Mr. WETMORE, he was one of the original members of our Board; and though so many years have since elapsed, it seems but yesterday that I was privileged to call upon him at his headquarters in Washington, while he was Commander-in-chief of the army, to invite him confidentially, at the request and in the name of our Founder, to be one of the Trustees. He accepted the invitation without a moment's hesitation, and with evident emotions of pleasure. The next morning found him with us at the formal organization of this Board. Those of the original members who are still left, and they are but few, will recall him, as I do, in his undress uniform, with nothing but the stars on his shoulder-straps to indicate his rank, kneeling by the side

of Mr. PEABODY and Governor AIKEN in a little room at Willard's, while good Bishop MCILVAINE invoked the blessing of heaven on the work we were assembled to inaugurate.

A few months afterwards, he was with us at New York for nearly a week, at the meeting at which our organization was completed, our plans matured, and our first General Agent, Dr. SEARS, appointed. The brilliant entertainment which Mr. PEABODY gave to the Trustees on that occasion, in special honor of General and Mrs. GRANT, will not be forgotten by any one who was present at it. From that time onward he attended our meetings as often as it was in his power, — at Richmond, at Baltimore, at New York, at Boston, and at Washington, where, as President of the United States, in 1870, he gave a banquet to the Trustees at the Executive Mansion.

Meeting him casually in one of the corridors of this hotel, just before his departure for Europe, I said to him, in bidding him "Good-by," "Don't forget our Peabody meetings, General, on your return." And his reply was emphatic, "They are among the last things I shall ever forget, Mr. WINTHROP; and I shall always be with you when I can." He was with us, accordingly, on several successive occasions after his return home, including our very last meeting; when, though already a suffering invalid, he spent a large part of two days in consultation with the Board, and evinced a warm, personal, intelligent interest in all our proceedings. He had set a special value on Mr. PEABODY's munificent endowment, as the first practical manifestation, on a grand scale, of that spirit of conciliation and magnanimity which he himself had displayed so signally in the very flush of victory. He felt deeply, too, that the education of the children of all classes and races was vital to the prosperity and welfare not only of the Southern States, but of the whole country; and he united with us in invoking the aid of the government.

The death of General GRANT leaves us with but four of the sixteen original members of this Board. It is pleasant for us to remember that two of our departed associates — in addition to our founder, Mr. PEABODY — have received at their death the supreme honors of Westminster Abbey, — Bishop MCILVAINE in 1873, and now General GRANT. But it is even more pleasant for us to look back on all whom we have lost as having enjoyed the esteem and respect of their fellow-countrymen, and as having entitled themselves to our own grateful and affectionate remembrance. We have filled the vacancies in sad succession, as we are bound to do now ; but the places of not a few of them will long be vacant still in the hearts of those who have been associated with them in a Trust so dear to us all.

I will no longer detain you from listening to the Annual Report of our General Agent.

At the conclusion of Mr. Winthrop's remarks Mr. STUART addressed the Board as follows : —

MR. CHAIRMAN, — I hope I shall not be regarded by my colleagues as officious or obtrusive in moving that so much of our Chairman's Address as refers to the death of General GRANT be referred to a Select Committee of three, to consider and report what action should be taken by the Board in relation thereto.

General GRANT, though a native and resident of the North, in fact belonged to the whole country ; and it has seemed to me that it would tend to give emphasis to that fact if the movement to do honor to his memory were to come from a Southern man.

I therefore, as the representative of Virginia, — a State which was under many obligations to General GRANT, — take the liberty of submitting that motion.

The motion was passed, and Messrs. STUART, HAYES, and MANNING were appointed the Committee.

Mr. EVARTS then moved that the tribute to the memory of Mr. WETMORE be referred to a Special Committee, which was accordingly done; and Messrs. EVARTS, AIKEN, and WHIPPLE were appointed.

Mr. EVARTS, in behalf of the Committee to whom was referred that part of the Chairman's address relating to the death of Mr. WETMORE, made the following Report, which was unanimously adopted, all the members of the Board rising when the vote was put: —

The Committee appointed to present a suitable minute upon the death of Mr. WETMORE to be entered in the records of the Board, respectfully submit the following: —

Resolved, That this Board has heard with a sensible grief of the death of their esteemed associate, Mr. SAMUEL WETMORE, and desire to acknowledge the value of his great services to the Board, and to the interests of the administration of the Peabody Fund, and his steadfast and stainless character as a merchant and a citizen.

Resolved, That the conduct by Mr. WETMORE of the office of Treasurer of the Board for eighteen years, the whole period of the existence of the Peabody Foundation, has been governed by an absolute integrity, a scrupulous and circumspect care, and a uniform urbanity of manner, which have received the confidence, respect, and affection of all his associates.

Resolved, That a copy of these Resolutions be communicated to the widow and family of our deceased friend, with our expression of sincere condolence with them in their great bereavement.

Mr. STUART, in behalf of the Committee to consider the tribute paid to General GRANT, submitted the following Report and Resolutions, which were unanimously adopted, all the members rising when the question was put: —

THE Committee to whom was referred so much of our Chairman's opening Address as refers to the death of General U. S. GRANT, have had the same under consideration, and respectfully submit the following

REPORT.

Death has again broken the ranks of our Board. General ULYSSES S. GRANT, the laurel-crowned warrior, the statesman who was twice elevated by the suffrages of the American people to the Presidency of the United States, the large-hearted patriot whose affections and aspirations during life were dedicated to his country's welfare and honor, the soldier who fought through long years of war that peace and all its attendant blessings might be secured to his countrymen, has been summoned from our side.

He went to his grave honored and lamented by men of all sections, and parties, and races. Men who had been arrayed against him on the battle-field twenty years ago were no less sincere in their grief for his death than those who had stood by his side in the deadly encounters of war. All appreciated his patriotic purposes. All admired his heroic courage and steadfastness. All honored his truthfulness and fidelity to every obligation. Bold, fearless, and aggressive in war, he was humane and magnanimous in the hour of victory. When, mainly through his efforts, civil war had ceased, he was among the first to seek to calm the angry passions to which it had given birth, and to invoke

the blessings of peace and the restoration of union in fact as well as in name.

All remember how his patriotic appeal to his countrymen at the commencement of his first Presidential term, "Let us have peace," thrilled the heart of every true American from the Lakes to the Gulf, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. From that hour to the close of his earthly career there is good reason to believe that the first wish of his heart was to witness the fulfilment of that prayer. When he stood as it were on the verge of the grave, — when his mortal frame was wasted by disease, and his *tongue* had lost the power of giving utterance to the thoughts which filled his great soul, — he made the *hand* which had so successfully wielded the sword in defence of the Union its substitute, to record his gratitude to God for having permitted him to live long enough to witness the restoration of union and fraternity between his lately discordant countrymen.

These noble sentiments sank deeply into the American mind, and awakened an echo in every patriotic heart. When he was stricken with the disease which finally proved fatal, the hearts of the people of all sections overflowed with sympathy; and when the end came, a wail of grief was heard throughout our whole country, which found expression in popular meetings, through the public press, and in every other mode of testifying respect and affection known to civilized society; and his obsequies were celebrated with a solemn pomp and ceremony unparalleled in our country since the death of WASHINGTON.

General GRANT was one of the sixteen original Trustees named by Mr. Peabody himself to administer his beneficent trust in behalf of the illiterate children of the Southern States. He was in full sympathy with the purpose of the founder of the trust, and earnestly and cordially co-operated with his associates in their efforts to fulfil it.

At the date of his appointment, he was, with probably one exception, the youngest member of the Board, and his robust frame and apparently vigorous health gave promise of long life. But as it has pleased Him in whose hands are the issues of life and death to order otherwise, all that remains for us is with bowed heads and reverent hearts to submit to His decree.

Having assembled now at our Annual Meeting for the first time since this great affliction fell upon us, we, the surviving members of the Board of Trustees of the Peabody Educational Fund, gladly embrace the opportunity to place on our official records this testimonial of our profound esteem for the character of our deceased associate, of our sincere grief at his loss, and of our sympathy with his widow and family in their bereavement.

Of the achievements of General GRANT as a soldier and a statesman, we have purposely forborne to speak more fully. They are of too recent date, and in some respects too closely connected with the political and party contests of the day, to admit of impartial judgment by contemporaries. We therefore remit these subjects to the domain of history, to which they properly belong.

But there are aspects of his character and attributes of his nature which elevate him far above the plane of the mere politician. Upon these all can dwell with pleasure. His heroic courage, his unselfish devotion to his country, his fidelity to his friends and his magnanimity to those who had been his enemies, his prompt obedience to every call of duty, and his broad and catholic patriotism, which embraced in its scope his whole country, and ignored all sectional divisions, must command the approval of all good men. Like Washington, he believed "the union of the States" to be "the palladium of our political safety and prosperity"; and no one was more prompt than he "to frown upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate

any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts."

Whatever differences of opinion may exist as to the wisdom of special acts which he felt called on to perform during his long and brilliant career, few will be found disposed to question the purity of his motives, and a still smaller number to deny his title to be regarded as one of the most illustrious men of the nineteenth century.

In private life he was faithful in the discharge of every duty. A devoted husband, an affectionate and indulgent father, a law-abiding citizen, a kind neighbor, a courteous and affable gentleman, he enjoyed the confidence and esteem of all who knew him, and few had warmer and more steadfast and devoted friends.

As a member of this Board he was prompt in his attendance on its sessions, and an active and zealous supporter of every measure proposed by it for the promotion of the sacred trusts committed to its charge, and the surviving members will never cease to deplore the loss of his companionship and the withdrawal of the moral weight and influence which his great name gave to the deliberations and action of the Board.

RESOLUTIONS.

Resolved, That the foregoing Report be approved and adopted by the Board, and that it be spread at large on our record as a heartfelt, though imperfect, tribute of affection and respect by the surviving members of the Board to the memory of their late distinguished associate.

Resolved, That our Chairman be requested to transmit a properly authenticated copy of these proceedings to the widow and family of General GRANT, with an assurance of the profound sympathy of each and every member of the Board in their sore bereavement.

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